

Aerodrome Operations in EASA Compliant Aerodromes: Vehicle Operations & Airside Driving

Sofema Online (SOL) www.sofemaonline.com considers key elements of the Vehicle Operations and Airside Driving Management.

Introduction

In EASA-compliant aerodromes, vehicle operations and airside driving are critical areas that require strict adherence to regulatory requirements, best practices, and effective competence management.

- By focusing on these areas, aerodrome operators can ensure safe, efficient, and compliant operations that minimize risks and enhance overall safety.
- The integration of technology, regular training, and continuous improvement processes are key to maintaining high standards in airside vehicle operations.

Regulatory Drivers for Airside Driving

Vehicle operations and airside driving at EASA-compliant aerodromes are governed by specific regulations to ensure safety and operational efficiency. Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 outlines the rules under which vehicles may operate on the movement and other operational areas of an aerodrome.

Part-ADR.OPS (Aerodrome Operations) includes specific requirements for airside driving, focusing on safety management, operational procedures, and competence requirements.

EASA mandates that aerodromes implement an SMS, which ensures the identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks associated with vehicle operations on the airside.

Airside Driver & Vehicle Key Requirements

Drivers operating vehicles on movement areas must hold a valid driving authorisation issued by the aerodrome operator. This authorisation specifies the areas where the driver is allowed to operate and is contingent upon successful completion of training and proficiency checks.

Vehicles must be fit for purpose and properly equipped, including the requirement to display obstruction lights and company insignia. Daily inspections, fault reporting, and communication system checks are mandated to ensure vehicles' operational readiness

Aerodromes must have clear procedures for vehicle operations, including compliance with rules of the air and air traffic services procedures, dissemination of information to drivers, and reporting of incidents

Authorisation of Vehicle Drivers:

- ADR.OPS.B.024 specifies that drivers operating in the movement area or other operational areas require an authorisation issued by the aerodrome operator.
- This authorisation is contingent on drivers meeting several criteria, such as holding a valid driving licence, completing relevant training, and demonstrating competence
- Temporary permits may be granted for specific situations, but the vehicles must be escorted by an authorised vehicle.

Operation of Vehicles:

- ADR.OPS.B.027 mandates that vehicles operating on the manoeuvring area must adhere to strict rules, including maintaining communication with air traffic services and following the established speed limits and routes
- Drivers are encouraged to adopt a "sterile-cab" approach, minimizing distractions such as phone use, listening to music, or engaging in non-essential conversations while driving

Foreign Object Debris (FOD) - Aerodrome operators are required to establish measures to prevent the generation of FOD. This involves regular inspections of areas prone to FOD, such as construction sites, cargo areas, and aircraft maintenance areas.

The control of Foreign Object Debris (FOD) at EASA-compliant aerodromes is governed by ADR.OPS.B.016 This regulation mandates that aerodrome operators establish and implement a comprehensive FOD control program.

- The aerodrome operator must establish a FOD control program that involves all organizations operating or providing services at the aerodrome.
- The program requires ensuring personnel awareness through appropriate activities and training.
- This includes increasing awareness of the causes and effects of FOD and promoting active participation in FOD prevention during daily routines.
- Personnel must be trained to recognize potential FOD hazards and take corrective actions

Best Practices for vehicle operations and airside driving at EASA-compliant aerodromes focus on ensuring the highest levels of safety, efficiency, and environmental protection. Some key best practices include:

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Clearly defined SOPs for airside driving, which include speed limits, vehicle routing, and communication protocols with air traffic control (ATC).
 - These procedures should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in regulations or operational requirements.
- **Driver Training Programs:** Comprehensive training programs for airside drivers that cover regulatory requirements, local procedures, and safety awareness.
 - This training should include practical assessments and periodic refresher courses to maintain competence.
- **Visual and Audible Warnings:** Vehicles operating on the airside should be equipped with appropriate visual (e.g., high-visibility markings, lights) and audible warnings to alert other vehicles and personnel of their presence.
- **Regular Audits and Inspections:** Conduct regular audits and inspections of vehicle operations to ensure compliance with safety standards. This includes vehicle maintenance checks, driver performance reviews, and operational audits.
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation:** Continuous risk assessment of airside operations, including vehicle movements, to identify potential hazards and implement mitigation measures.
 - **Vehicle Access** - Only essential vehicles should be allowed on the maneuvering area, with the number of vehicles kept to a minimum to ensure safety

Management of Competence Vehicle Operations

Competence management is crucial for ensuring that personnel involved in vehicle operations and airside driving possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties safely and effectively. Key elements include:

- **Competence Framework:** Develop a competence framework that outlines the required skills, knowledge, and behaviors for airside drivers. This framework should align with EASA requirements and industry best practices.
- **Training Programs:** Implement structured training programs that cover both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Training should include initial certification, on-the-job training, and recurrent training to keep skills current.
- **Certification and Licensing:** Ensure that all drivers are certified and licensed according to EASA and national regulatory requirements. This includes medical fitness assessments, knowledge of aerodrome layout, and understanding of airside regulations.

- **Performance Monitoring:** Regularly monitor the performance of airside drivers through assessments and audits. This helps identify areas for improvement and ensures that standards are being maintained.
- **Continual Professional Development (CPD):** Encourage continuous learning and professional development to keep pace with regulatory changes, technological advancements, and evolving best practices.
- **Incident and Feedback Mechanism:** Implement a system for reporting incidents, near-misses, and other safety concerns related to airside driving. Use this feedback to refine training programs and operational procedures.

Next Steps

Sofema Aviation Services Provides Regulatory Training covering Airside Safety please see the following <https://sassofia.com/course/airside-safety-training-3-days/> for questions and comments please email team@sassofia.com